

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 02399 202118Z

46

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-10 NIC-01 OMB-01 AID-05 PC-01

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USIA-06 /086 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SEKSTATE WASHDC 8760

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OUAGADOUGOU 2399

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, ML, UV

SUBJECT: MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

REF: BAMAKO 4011

1. ACCORDING TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR LE BLANC, A COMPANY OF VOLTAN PARATROOPERS IN OUAGADOUGOU HAS BEEN PUT ON ALERT AS RESULT OF MALIAN TROOP MOVEMENT IN DISPUTED AREA OF MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER. INSTEAD OF AIRLIFT, GOUV REPORTEDLY INTENDS TO SEND PARATROOPERS IN NEW DESERT TRUCKS RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM FRANCE WHICH WILL PERMIT THEM TO PATROL ENTIRE AREA.

2. FINAL ORDERS FOR TROOPS TO MOVE WILL NOT BE GIVEN, HOWEVER, BEFORE RETURN OF PRESIDENT LAMIZANA WHO IS PRESENTLY PARTICIPATING IN POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF HIS REGIME IN SEVERAL CITIES OF WESTERN REGION. LE BLANC COMMENTED THAT

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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 02399 202118Z

VOLTAN ARMY IS PRESENTLY IN POOR SHAPE FOR MILITARY

CAMPAIGN EVEN OF LIMITED SCOPE BECAUSE BEST OFFICERS ARE ALL SERVING IN GOVERNMENT JOBS AS MINISTERS OR PREFECTS.

3. GOM HAS REPORTEDLY ENCOURAGED A RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF MALIAN NOMADS TO MOVE WITH THEIR HERDS INTO BORDER AREA NORTH OF DORI WHICH IS SPARSELY POPULATED BUT WHERE PASTURES ARE GOOD AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. AS POINTED OUT PARA 5 REFTEL, HERDSMEN FROM BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE USED THIS AREA FOR YEARS BUT PRESENT INFLUX OF MALIAN NOMADS AND PRESENCE OF MALIAN TROOPS SUGGEST TO VOLTANS THAT THIS IS NOT JUST SEASONAL MOVEMENT OF HERDS BUT THAT MALIANS INTEND TO STAY.

4. LE BLANC STATES THAT FRENCH MAPS OF COLONIAL PERIOD CLEARLY SHOW DISPUTED AREA TO BE PART OF UPPER VOLTA. HE INTIMATED, HOWEVER, THAT DOCUMENTS WERE NOT NEARLY AS POSITIVE AND THAT GOVERNORS IN BAMAKO AND OUAGADOUGOU HAD CLASHED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS OVER LOCATION OF BORDER AT TIME OF FRENCH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION.

5. IT MAY BE THAT PRESIDENT LAMIZANA, WHO HATES TO MAKE QUICK DECISIONS, WILL DO NOTHING FOR TIME BEING. HE HAD TOLD FRENCH AMBASSADOR THAT HE WOULD APPEAL TO OAU AND EVEN TO UN BUT HAS NOT DONE SO AS YET. HE MAY ALSO POSTPONE DESPATCH OF PARATROOPERS. AT ANY RATE, HE IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE FOR ABIDJAN NOVEMBER 24 TO ATTEND ENTENTE COUNCIL MEETING AND IT WOULD BEN ENTIRELY HIS STYLE TO POSTPONE A DECISION UNTIL HIS RETURN FROM ABIDJAN.

6. IN CONTRAST TO L'ESSOR ARTICLE MENTIONED PARA 3 REFTEL, THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLICITY IN OUAGADOUGOU REGARDING BORDER DISPUTE. EXCEPT FOR RECENT RUMORS (APPARENTLY UNFOUNDED) THAT TWO VOLTANS HAD BEEN KILLED IN BORDER AREA, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE CONCERN IN OUAGADOUGOU, AT LEAST AMONG OUR VOLTAN CONTACTS, REGARDING BORDER DISPUTE.
GRAHAM

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